

# The separate African winter quarters of Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* and Collared Flycatcher *F. albicollis*

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**Le Gobemouche noir *Ficedula hypoleuca* et la Gobemouche à collier *F. albicollis* ont des quartiers d'hiver africains bien séparés.** Goodenough *et al.* (2009) ont écrit que le Gobemouche noir *Ficedula hypoleuca* et son proche cousin le Gobemouche à collier *F. albicollis* hivernent en sympatrie dans des pays comme le Tchad et le Nigeria, mais c'est incorrect. Le Gobemouche noir hiverne principalement dans les forêts claires soudanaises de la Sierra Leone au Cameroun, tandis que le Gobemouche à collier hiverne dans les forêts claires de la région zambézienne au sud de l'Equateur.

**Summary.** The claim that Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* and its close relative the Collared Flycatcher *F. albicollis* 'winter sympatrically in countries such as Chad and Nigeria' (Goodenough *et al.* 2009) is not true. Pied Flycatcher winters mainly in the Sudanian woodlands from Cameroon west to Sierra Leone, but Collared Flycatcher does so in the Zambebian woodlands south of the equator.

In their discussion of factors relevant to the conservation of Pied Flycatchers *Ficedula hypoleuca*, Goodenough *et al.* (2009) claim that this species and its close relative the Collared Flycatcher *F. albicollis* 'winter sympatrically in countries such as Chad and Nigeria (Dowsett 1993, Elgood *et al.* 1994)'. This is untrue, and is not what was shown by Dowsett (1993).

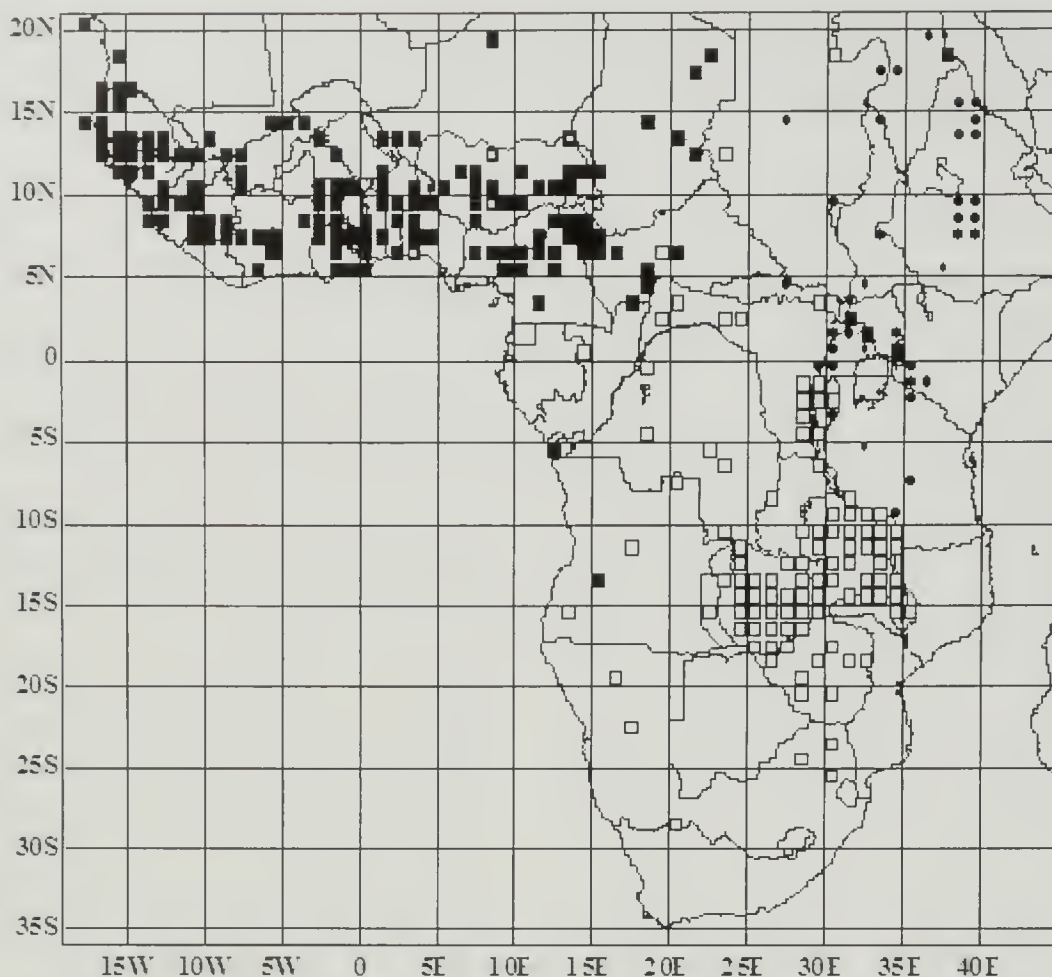
A literature search has produced many specimen and correctly identified sight records of *Ficedula* flycatchers in sub-Saharan Africa. To these have been added my own observations from several countries in which these two species occur in winter or on passage, from western Mali to northern Cameroon for Pied Flycatchers, and north-east Nigeria to southern Zambia for Collared Flycatchers.

## Winter distribution of Pied and Collared Flycatchers

Goodenough *et al.* (2009) were perhaps influenced by the fact that Elgood *et al.* (1994) wrote of Collared Flycatcher in Nigeria 'uncommon... Sep-Mar', which implies a presence throughout that period. This echoed Elgood *et al.* (1966), who considered that it is 'probably a regular winter visitor'. However, the few records of Collared Flycatcher in Nigeria all fall between 13 September and 1 November, except for one bird which spent the period 23 February–25 March at Vom (Smith 1966). There is a handful of records from neighbouring Chad (11 September–19 October and 11–15 April: Salvan 1968). For both

Nigeria and Chad, Dowsett (1993) made it clear that the species occurs only on passage.

Pied Flycatchers too are known only on passage through Chad (7 September to the first half of October and 29 March–10 April: Salvan 1968, Newby 1980), which is at the eastern limit of the species' migration. But they do winter in considerable numbers in Nigeria. Elgood *et al.* (1994) reported them between October and April, but extreme dates are in fact 17 September (Malamfatori, Lake Chad: Dowsett 1969) and 23 May (Vom: Smith 1966). Pied Flycatchers winter south in Nigeria from 11°N (Falgore, January: Wilkinson & Beecroft 1985; Zaria, 27 February: Fry 1965), mostly between 07°N and 10°N. There are few records from the coastal zone of Nigeria (e.g. Lagos: Forrester 1971, Gee & Heigham 1977). In its overall wintering area (essentially Cameroon west to Mali, south to Sierra Leone: Serle 1949; pers. obs.) the species frequents especially the Sudanian woodlands, less often clearings or the edge of forest. In the Sahel it occurs only on passage, and then there is a preponderance of autumn (southbound passage) records at several localities; e.g. at Malamfatori, at least 14 between 17 September and 9 October (Dowsett 1969), but only three on northbound passage (early April to 3 May: Dowsett 1968, Sharland 1969). In contrast, with the drying out of the Lake Chad area, Gustafsson *et al.* (2003) in the period 1997–2000 had only a single autumn record at Malamfatori (8 September), and none at all in spring. Near Jos (2001–09), M. Stevens (*in*



**Figure 1.** Records (mapped by degree square) of Pied Flycatchers *Ficedula hypoleuca* (black squares), Collared Flycatchers *F. albicollis* (open squares) and Semi-collared Flycatchers *F. semitorquata* (black dots). Localities at which two species occur are denoted by 'pied' symbols.

Distribution (par carrés d'un degré de latitude-longitude) des Gobemouches noirs *Ficedula hypoleuca* (carrés noirs), à collier *F. albicollis* (carrés creux) et à demi-collier *F. semitorquata* (points noirs). Les localités où se rencontrent deux espèces sont indiquées par un symbole noir et blanc.

*litt.* 2009) ringed 100 in October compared to 45 in March–April.

In contrast to Pied Flycatchers, Collared Flycatchers winter south of the equator, in the Zambezi woodlands, centred on Zambia and Malawi in particular (Moreau 1972, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2006, Dowsett *et al.* 2008). Fig. 1 shows the distribution of these two species, and the separation of the centres of distribution is clear, with the Central African rain forest largely avoided. Records of Semi-collared Flycatchers *F. semitorquata* are also mapped; as they are difficult to separate, some records might have to be reassessed, but it does seem that their winter distribution is near the equator, centred on Uganda and western Kenya (e.g. Pearson 1998, and references therein).

Future workers are likely to be misled by the published statement in such an authoritative

journal as *Ibis*, but the editor declined to publish this clarification there.

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